



Land and Freedom
The Diggers' vision to reclaim the Land - April 1649

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A account from St. George's Hill April 1999

A commemorative account of Digger's day.. a forwarded story from Ali in Oxford.

"...making the Earth a Common Treasury for All, both Rich and Poor.

As midnight drew near on Thursday 1st April 1999, 350 years to the day Gerrard Winstanley and his followers thrust their spades into the fertile earth of St. George's Hill near Weybridge, a party of two set off from the Diggers' commemorative celebrations to retrace those first pioneering footsteps, making their way once round the public roads encircling the hill.

In 1649 when St. George's Hill remained Common Land, still unfettered by the enclosures of private dominion, Winstanley set off to cultivate this land to feed the starving landless; the dispossessed peasants of the republic. Within a year Cromwell's troops had cleared these dangerous revolutionaries off the land once more.

Today with seemingly deliberate spite, the propertied have developed a rabbit warren of private roads and exclusive mansions, guarded by gated-access and a private security force to protect its fearful inhabitants and their exclusive golf courses from the dangerous rabble beyond. St. Georges Hill is today the supreme English epitome of Private Enclosure, Wealth and Privilege so starkly challenged by those Diggers 350 years ago; as clear a statement as any from the powers-that-be against the social aspirations of the many.

The True
Levellers Standard
ADVANCED:

O R,
The State of Community opened, and Presented to the
Sons of Men.

By Gerrard Winstanley,
Richard Godwin,
Thomas Sharp,
William Bagwell,
Robert Ferguson,
Thomas Edes,
Henry Backhouse,
John Pepple, &c.

Beginning to Blize and Mow the Waste Land upon
George-Hill, in the Parish of Wotton, in the
County of Surrey.

April 26

London,
Printed by T. Newell, MDCXLIX.

Negotiating the supposedly well guarded roads the two defiantly ignored the signs of theft all around. At the highest point where once lay the ancient fort that staked the summit of the Mother's body - a site where St. George slew her Python, and acquisitioned her Oracle - there now stands a new 'castle', a monument of glass, erected as if to reinforce the Apollonian slaying of the Earth to the god of Private Dominion, rudely stating its message that Common is enemy where Privilege and Property reign supreme.

With the light of a full moon illuminating their way in the profoundly still and unusually warm night air, the two walked around the remaining crescent of public land that skirts the ramparts of the older monument, and the second circuit was completed.

It was the first full moon after the equinox on which the Celtic 'Pelagian' Church celebrated the Resurrection of the Earth and the Spirit of the Christ. In springs where serpentine waters channel the lifeblood of the earth, on hill tops exposed to the serpentine air breathing life into the land, our forbears celebrated nature's fluids and rising solar forces as they quickened the return of life within the Mother's womb.

Where the moon shone high and silently through a clearing in the wood the two climbed the forted embankment, passing through a portalled hedge as they made their way out onto the summit. Ahead, nearly complete, lay the forms of three imposing post-modernist buildings hewn of vast wooden beams, stainless steel joins and solid float-glass walls. So around this glass temple they walked - and thrice round the summit they made.

Where the bulldozers had skinned the earth to make way for the foundations of these Temples of Dominion a new mound of loosened earth stood waiting to be rebedded into quaint ornamental gardens. So to the summit of this was climbed and using bare hands the soil dug once again, this time for common aspiration, in spite of its present private acquisition.

Withdrawn to the gladed bank, through the portal hedge the party came upon a fallen branch formed in mimicry of an antler of the majestic red deer. So with antlered heads, as shamans of old they each turned and gave their respect to the moon. Sitting down in the glade they broke the bread of the land and drank from the waters of the earth. A small supper to focus the nights events and quietly reflect upon under the silvery moonlight.

There was one final task to be settled. Three days later on the official day of Easter, a bag of Diggers' soil was scattered over a public allotment and dug-in - releasing its fertility to bring new life at the end of an old, fading millennium.

"And now I must wait to see the Spirit do his own work in the hearts of others...." - Gerrard Winstanley, 1650.

The Digging continues...

Digger Quotes

Being summe of ye most interesting and poignant quotes from Gerrard Winstanley and the seventeenth century Diggers including 'Then and Now'

"..yet my mind was not at rest, because nothing was acted, and thoughts ran into me, that words and writings were all nothing, and must die, for action is the life of all, and if thou dost not act, thou dost nothing."

Gerrard Winstanley, *A Watch-Word to the City of London and the Armie.*

" And thus you Powers of England, and of the whole World, we have declared our reasons why we have begun to dig upon *George* hill in Surrey. One thing I must tell you more.....

"Break in pieces quickly the Band of particular Propriety [property], disown this oppressing Murder, Opression and Thievery of Buying and Selling of Land, owning of landlords and paying of Rents and give thy Free Consent to make the Earth a Common Treasury without grumbling.....that all may enjoy the benefit of their Creation.

And hereby thou wilt *honour thy Father and thy Mother* : Thy Father, which is the spirit of community, that made all and that dwells in all. Thy Mother, which is the Earth, that brought us all forth: That as a true Mother, loves all her children. Therefore do not hinder the Mother Earth from giving all her children suck, by thy Inclosing into particular hands, and holding up that cursed Bondage of Inclosure by thy Power."

"Propriety and single interest divides the people of a land and the whole world into parties and is the cause of all wars and bloodshed and contention everywhere"

Gerrard Winstanley & 14 others *The True Levellers Standard Advanced* - April, 1649

"Was the earth made to preserve a few covetous, proud men to live at ease, and for them to bag and barn up the treasures of the Earth from others, that these may beg or starve in a fruitful land; or was it made to preserve all her children?"

Gerrard Winstanley *The New Law of Righteousness*, 1649

"True religion and undefiled is this, To make restitution of the earth which hath been taken and held from the common people by the power of Conquests formerly and so set the oppressed free."

Gerrard Winstanley *A New Yeers Gift for the Parliament and the Army*, 1650

"Money must not any longer....be the great god that hedges in some and hedges out others, for money is but part of the Earth; and after our work of the Earthly Community is advanced, we must make use of gold or silver as we do of other metals but not to buy or sell."

Gerrard Winstanley and 44 others *A Declaration from the Poor Oppressed People of England Directed to all that Call Themselves or are Called Lords of Manors*, 1649

". . . a studying imagination comes into man, which is the devil for it is the cause of all evil, and sorrows in the World; that is he who puts out the eyes of

mans Knowledge and tells him he must beleeve what others have writ or spoke, and not trust his own experience."

Gerrard Winstanley [so don't believe what he wrote either if it isn't true to your own experience!] *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*. 1652

"And the Reason is this, Every single man, Male and Female, is a perfect creature unto himself.....so that the flesh of man being subject to Reason, his Maker, hath him to be his Teacher and Ruler within himself, therefore needs not run abroad after any Teacher and Ruler without him, for he needs not that any man should teach him..."

"Oh thou Powers of *England*, though thou hast promised to make this People a Free People, yet thou hast so handled the matter, through thy self-seeking humour, That thou hast warpped us up more in bondage, and oppression lies heavier upon us;.....confounding all sorts of people by they Government of doing and undoing."

"We are made to hold forth this Declaration to you that are the Great Council and to you the Great Army of the Land of *England*, that you may know what we would have, and what you are bound to give us by your Covenants and Promises; and that you may jyn us in this Work, and so find Peace. Or else, if you do oppose us us, we have peace in our Work, and in declaring this Report: And you shall be left without excuse.

The Work we are going about is this, To dig up *George-Hill* and trhe waste Ground thereabouts, and to Sow Corn, and to eat our bread together by the sweat of our brows."

"Those that Buy and Sell Land, and are landlords, have got it either by Oppression, or Murther, or Theft."

"Take notice, That *England* is not a a Free People, till the Poor that have no Land, have a free allowance to dig and labour the Commons, and so live as Comfortably as the Landlords that live in their Inclosures

".....then certainly none shall say, This is my Land, work for me and I'le give you Wages. For, the Earth is the Lords, that is, Mans, who is the Lord of Creation.....

"This delares likewise to all Labourers, or such as are called Poor people, that they shall not dare to work for Hire, for any Landlord, or any that is lifted up above others; for by their labours, they have lifted up Tyrants and Tyranny; and by denying to labor for Hire, they shall pull them down again. He that works for another, either for Wages or to pay him Rent, works unrighteously, and still lifts up the Curse; but they that are resolved to work and eat together, making the Earth a Common Treasury, doth joyn hands with Christ, to lift up the Creation from Bondage, and restores all things from the Curse."

Gerrard Winstanley & 14 others *The True Levellers Standard Advanced* - April, 1649

"Therefore we are resolved to be cheated no longer, nor to be held under the slavish fear of you no longer, see the Earth was made for us, as well as for you: And if the Common Land belongs to us who are the poor oppressed, surely the woods that grow upon the Commons belong to us likewise...."

Gerrard Winstanley and 44 others *A Declaration from the Poor Oppressed People of England Directed to all that Call Themselves or are Called Lords of Manors*, 1649

"And London, nay England, look to thy freedom, I'le assure thee, thou art very neere to be cheated of it, and if thou lose it now after all thy boasting, truly thy posterity will curse thee, for thy unfaithfulness to them: everyone talks of freedome, but there are but few that act for freedome, and the actors for freedome are oppressed by the talkers and verball professors of freedome; if thou wouldest what true freedome is, read over this and my other writings [O.K., Gerrard, that's enough plugging your pamphlets] and thou shalt see it lies in the community in spirit and community in the earthly treasury...."

Gerrard Winstanley *A Watch-Word To The City of London and the Armie* 1649

"Search all your Laws, and Ile adventure my life, for I have little else to lose, That all Lords of Mannors hold Title to the Commons by no stronger hold than the Kings Will, whose Head is cut off; and the King held title as he was a Conqueror; now if you cast off the King who was Head of that power, surely the power of Lords of Mannors is the same; therefore performe your own Act of Parliament, and cast out that part of the Kinglie power likewise....."

"....the government we have gives freedome and livelihood to the Gentry, to have abundance, and to lock up Treasures of the Earth from the poor, so that rich men may have chests full of Gold and Silver, and houses full of Corn and Goods to look upon; and the poor that works to get it, can hardly live, and if they cannot work like Slaves, then they must starve.....and yet you say this is a righteous government, but surely it is no other than self-ishness, which is the great Red Dragon, the Murtherer.

"England is a Prison; the variety of subtillties in the Laws preserved by the Sword, are bolts, bars, and doors of the prison; the Lawyers are Jaylors, and poor men are the prisoners; for let a man fall into the hands of any from the Bailiffe to the Judge, and he is either undone, or wearie of his life."

"Buying and Selling is an Art, whereby people endeavour to cheat one another of the Land.....and true Religion is, To let every one enjoy it."

Gerrard Winstanley *A New-yeers Gift for the Parliament and Armie* 1650

"So long as the earth is intangled and appropriated into particular hands and kept there by the power of the sword.....so long the creation lies under bondage."

Gerrard Winstanley *Fire in the Bush* 1650

"And here I end, having put my arm as far as my strength will go to advance Righteousness; I have Writ, I have Acted, I have Peace: now I must wait to see the Spirit do his work in the hearts of others, and whether *England* shall be the first Land, or some others, wherein Truth shall sit down in triumph.

Anon. -but almost certainly Gerrard Winstanley *A Bill of Account of the most Remarkable Sufferings that the Diggers have met with from the great red Dragons power since April 1, 1649 / 1650?*

"The spirit Reason doth not preserve the creature and destroy another.....but it hath a regard to the whole creation; and knits every creature together into a onenesse; making every creature to be an upholder of his felow; and so every one is an assistant to preserve the whole.

"The clouds send down raine, and there is great undeniable reason in it, for otherwise the earth could not bring forth grasse and fruit. The earth sends forth grasse, or else cattel could not be preserved. The sunne gives his light and heate or else the Creation could not subsist. So that the mighty power Reason hath made these to give life and preservation one to another.

Gerrard Winstanley *Truth Lifting Up Its Head Above Scandals* 1649

"I am assured that if it be rightly searched into, the inward bondages of the minde, as covetousness, pride, hypocrisie, envy, sorrow, fears, desperation, and madness are all occasioned by the outward bondage that one sort of people lay upon another."

Gerrard Winstanley *The New Law of Righteousness*, 1649

THEN AND NOW SOUNDS FAMILIAR?

LUNCH OUTS & KETTLE-WATCHERS

"Some hearing of this Common Freedom think there must be a community of all the fruits of the earth whether they work or no, therefore strive to live idle on other men's labours."

Gerrard Winstanley *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*. 1652

RIP OFFS & BLAGGERS

"And because there were some treacherous persons drew up a note and subscribed our names to it, and by that moved some friends to give mony to this work of ours, when as we know of no such note, nor subscribed our hands to any, nor ever received any money from such Collection.

Therefore to prevent such a Cheat, I have mentioned a word or two at the end of a printed book against that treachery, that neither we nor our Friends may be cheated: And I desire, if any be willing to communicate of their substance unto our worke, that they would make a Collection among themselves, and send the money to *Cobham* to the Diggers owne hands, by some trusty friend of your owne, and so neither you nor we shall be cheated."

Gerrard Winstanley and others in a "Letter Taken at Wellingborough"-1650

BULLSHITTERS, MYSTICS & GURUS

"Everyone who speaks of any Herb, Plant, Art or Nature of Mankind is required to speak nothing by imagination, but what he hath found out by his own industry and observation in tryal."

Gerrard Winstanley *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*. 1652

COPS, BAILIFFS, "SECURITY" & TRASHINGS

"The first time, divers of the Diggers were carried Prisoners into *Walton* Church, where some of them were struck in the Church by the bitter Professors....

"Some of the Diggers were beaten by the Gentlemen, the Sheriff looking on, and afterwards five of them were carried to *White Lion* Prison, and kept there about five week and then let out.....

"They Arrested some of us and some they cast into Prison; and from others they went about to take away their Goods....

"One of the Diggers had his head sore wounded, and a Boy beaten, and his cloathes taken from him....

"Divers of the Diggers were beaten upon the *Hill* by *William Star* and *John Taylor*, and by men in womens apparel [Oh, alright then, Brays private detective agency never actually thought of that one on the road protests (so far!)], and so sore wounded, that some of them were fetched home in a Cart.

"The Dragonly enemy pulled down a House which the Diggers had built upon *George Hill* and cut their Spades and Howes to pieces.

"We had another House pulled down....

"Another Cart and Wheels was cut to pieces and some of our Tooles taken by force from us which we never had again.

"...we had all our Corn spoyled....

"...two soldiers sent by Parson *Platt* pulled down another house, and turned a poor old man and his wife out of doors to lie in the field on a cold night.

Anon. -but almost certainly Gerrard Winstanley *A Bill of Account of the most Remarkable Sufferings that the Diggers have met with from the great red Dragons power since April 1, 1649 / 1650?*

Credit , respect and thanks to Jim Paton at the Advisory Service for Squatters in Islington North London for these quotations - put together in January 1999

Threatening message received by today's Diggers

Parson Platt and other embittered people attacked the simple honesty of the seventeenth century Diggers. Unfortunately the same mean spirit is alive and well in 1999.

This anonymous email was sent by someone calling themselves "Trustnowun" on the Diggers350 email list in April 1999. It seems to be from an American (due to the use of the very un-English 'pissed').

Our lives are described as 'worthless'. Sounds like some serious bad ideas in the author's head.

The note seems to have been inspired by one or more individuals involved in organised crime resident on St. George's Hill and be a warning to us never to return to the home of the Diggers.

Any further information on whoever might have written it - for example gleaned from the message header appreciated - please post to the Diggers350 list -

Post to the list: diggers350@egroups.com

Subscribe to the list: diggers350-subscribe@egroups.com

Diggers350 archive is at: <http://www.egroups.com/list/diggers350/>

Here is the message in full:

Received: 8 Apr 1999 08:19:15 -0000 from web806.mail.yahoo.com (128.11.23.66) by vault.egroups.com with SMTP; 8 Apr 1999 08:19:15 -0000

Message-ID: <19990408082227.10646.rocketmail@web806.mail.yahoo.com>
Received: from [194.73.231.251] by web806.mail.yahoo.com; Thu, 08 Apr 1999
01:22:27 PDT

Date: Thu, 8 Apr 1999 01:22:27 -0700 (PDT)

From: trustnowun n <trustnowun@yahoo.com>

Subject: [diggers350] St. George's Hill

For a lazy bunch of academic (well some of you at least) left-wing radicals - you are really quite stupid or naive (or maybe both). One would have thought that if you had read your history and UNDERSTOOD it - what happened 350 years ago stands as a warning to you. Now 350 years after a mad Jew led another band of morons (and yes, William Everard was the person solely responsible for the original occupation), your leaders have decided that this would be a "good" thing to re-enact.

What they have done is to lead you into encroaching upon the enclave of a very small minority of powerful individuals (and the word "powerful" - is used in the sense that most of you are clearly incapable of even imagining). These people have only got where they have in life and society by NEVER doing anything within the law. Aren't you wondering yet about the residents who APPEAR to have NO INTEREST in you whatsoever ??? - you should be. Some of these people do things for a living (and sometimes just for the sheer hell of it) that you only see on a Hollywood movie, or occasionally read about in the newspapers.

These people are neither worried or intimidated by your kind - but they ARE pissed!

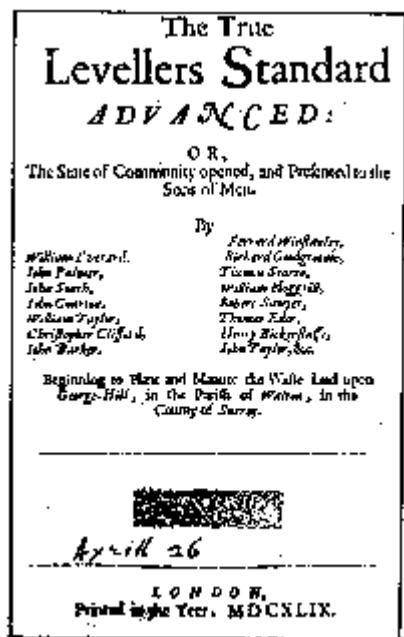
For the first time in your stupid worthless lives you may of bitten off here a little more than you can chew. They know who ALL of you are - Tony, Annie, Jon, Eric, Steve and even you Dave (who clearly ate one too many big-macs when he worked there !) - and you all should NOT be sleeping very soundly at the moment. The only hole you "diggers" are digging at the moment is the one that you are digging yourselves into.

This note to you all is not a joke - you REALLY do need to be seriously concerned - especially those of you with families on site. Never mind about your "negotiations" with Mr. Newberry - once you leave here, you will NEVER be allowed to assemble en-mass on this estate again. Those of you who are "in charge" of affairs in this "camp" need to have a long hard think about your responsibility to those you have led into this act of insurrection. This is your ONLY warning.

The True Levellers' Standard Advanced

Gerrard Winstanley - the Digger - was one of the first individuals to clearly identify the extension of private property rights to land as mankind's fundamental flaw. His clear understanding of The Earth as a gift bequeathed to all mankind 'without respect of persons' is articulated in a visionary flow of spirited prose.

The Levellers and the Diggers were inextricably connected, not just in time or in their social and political vision. When they first moved on to St George's Hill in Surrey on April 1st 1649 the Diggers called themselves The True Levellers. They saw themselves as a more visionary and less compromising movement. Gerrard Winstanley and his friend's words speak for themselves.



The True Levellers Standard ADVANCED:

OR,

The State of Community Opened, and Presented
to the Sons of Men.

By

Jerrard Winstanley, William Everard, Richard Goodgrome, John Palmer,
Thomas Starre, John South, William Hoggrill, John Courton, Robert Sawyer,
William Taylor, Thomas Eder, Christopher Clifford, Henry Bickerstaffe, John
Barker. John Taylor, &c.

Beginning to Plant and Manure the Waste land upon
George-Hill, in the parish of Walton, in the
County of Surrey.

L O N D O N

Printed in the Yeer, MDCXLIX.

*A Declaration to the Powers of England, and to all the Powers of the
World, shewing the Cause why the Common People of England have*

begun, and gives Consent to Digge up, Manure, and Sow Corn upon George-Hill in Surrey; by those that have Subscribed, and thousands more that gives Consent.



In the beginning of Time, the great Creator Reason, made the Earth to be a Common Treasury, to preserve Beasts, Birds, Fishes, and Man, the lord that was to govern this Creation; for Man had Domination given to him, over the Beasts, Birds, and Fishes; but not one word was spoken in the beginning, That one branch of mankind should rule over another. And the Reason is this, Every single man, Male and Female, is a perfect Creature of himself; and the same Spirit that made the Globe, dwels in man to govern the Globe; so that the flesh of man being subject to Reason, his Maker, hath him to be his Teacher and Ruler within himself, therefore needs not run abroad after any Teacher and Ruler without him, for he needs not that any man should teach him, for the same Anoynting that ruled in the Son of man, teacheth him all things.

But since humane flesh (that king of Beasts) began to delight himself in the objects of the Creation, more then in the Spirit Reason and Righteosness, who manifests himself to be the indweller in the Five Sences, of Hearing, Seeing, Tasting, Smelling, Feeling; then he fell into blindness of mind and weakness of heart, and runs abroad for a Teacher and Ruler: And so selfish imaginations taking possession of the Five Sences, and ruling as King in the room of Reason therein, and working with Covetousnesse, did set up one man to teach and rule over another; and thereby the Spirit was killed, and man was brought into bondage, and became a greater Slave to such of his own kind, then the Beasts of the field were to him.

And hereupon, The Earth (which was made to be a Common Treasury of relief for all, both Beasts and Men) was hedged in to In-closures by the teachers and rulers, and the others were made Servants and Slaves: And that Earth that is within this Creation made a Common Store-house for all, is bought and sold, and kept in the hands of a few, whereby the great Creator is mighty

dishonoured, as if he were a respecter of persons, delighting int he comfortable Livelihoods of some, and rejoicing in the miserable povertie and straits of others. From the beginning it was not so.

But this coming in of Bondage, is called *A-dam*, because this ruling and teaching power without, doth *dam* up the Spirit of Peace and Liberty; First within the heart, by filling it with slavish fears of others. Secondly without, by giving the bodies of one to be imprisoned, punished and oppressed by the outward power of another. And this evil was brought upon us through his own Covetousnesse, whereby he is blinded and made weak, and sees not the Law of Righteousnesse in his heart, which is the pure light of Reason, but looks abroad for it, and thereby the Creation is cast under bondage and curse, and the creator is sleighted; First by the Teachers and Rulers that sets themselves down in the Spirits room, to teach and rule, where he himself is only King. Secondly by the other, that refuses the Spirit, to be taught and governed by fellow Creatures, and this was called Israels Sin, in casting off the Lord and chusing *Saul*, one like themselves to be their King, when as they had the same Spirit of Reason and government in themselves, as he had, if they were but subject. And Israels rejecting of outward teachers and rulers to embrace the Lord, and to be all taught and ruled by that righteous King, that *Jeremiah* Prophesied shall rule in the new Heavens and new Earth in the latter dayes, will be their Restauration from bondage, *Jer. 23.5, 6.*

But for the present state of the old World that is running up like parchment in the fire, and wearing away, we see proud Imaginary flesh, which is the wise Serpent, rises up in flesh and gets dominion in some to rule over others, and so forces one part of the Creation man, to be a slave to another; and thereby the Spirit is killed in both. The one looks upon himself as a teacher and ruler, and so is lifted up in pride over his fellow Creature: The other looks upon himself as imperfect, and so is dejected in his spirit, and looks upon his fellow Creature of his own Image, as a Lord above him.

And thus *Esau*, the man of flesh, which is Covetousness and Pride, hath killed *Jacob*, the Spirit of meeknesse, and righteous government in the light of Reason, and rules over him: And so the Earth that was made a common Treasury for all to live comfortably upon, is become through mans unrighteous actions one over another, to be a place, wherein one torments another.

Now the great Creator, who is the Spirit Reason, suffered himself thus to be rejected, and troden underfoot by the covetous proud flesh, for a certain time limited; therefore saith he, *The Seed out of whom the Creation did proceed, which is my Self, shall bruise this Serpents head, and restore my Creation again from this curse and bondage; and when I the King of Righteousnesse reigns in every man, I will be the blessing of the Earth and the joy of all Nations.*

And since the coming in of the stoppage, or the *A-dam* the Earth hath been inclosed and given to the Elder brother *Esau*, or man of flesh, and hath been bought and sold from one to another; and *Jacob*, or the younger brother, that is to succeed or come forth next, who is the universal spreading power of righteousness that gives liberty to the whole Creation, is made a servant.

And this Elder Son, or man of bondage, hath held the Earth in bondage to himself, not by a meek Law of Righteousnesse, But by subtle selfish Councils, and by open and violent force; for wherefore is it that there is such Wars and

rumours of Wars in the Nations of the Earth? and wherefore are men so mad to destroy one another? But only to uphold Civil propriety of Honor, Dominion and Riches one over another, which is the curse the Creation groans under, waiting for deliverance.

But when once the Earth becomes a Common Treasury again, as it must, for all the Prophesies of Scriptures and Reason are Circled here in this Community, and mankind must have the Law of Righteousness once more writ in his heart, and all must be made of one heart, and one mind.

Then this Enmity in all Lands will cease, for none shall dare to seek a Dominion over others, neither shall any dare to kill another, nor desire more of the Earth then another; for he that will rule over, imprison, oppresse, and kill his fellow Creatures, under what pretence soever, is a destroyer of the Creation, and an actor of the Curse, and walks contrary to the rule of righteousness: (*Do, as you would have others do to you; and love your Enemies, not in words, but in actions.*)

Therefore you powers of the Earth, or Lord Esau, the Elder brother, because you have appeared to rule the Creation, first take notice, That the powere that sets you to work, is selvish Covetousness, and an aspiring Pride, to live in glory and ease over *Jacob*, the meek Spirit; that is, the Seed that lies hid, in & among the poor Common People, or younger Brother, out of whom the blessing of Deliverance is to rise and spring up to all Nations.

And Reason, the living king of righteousness, doth only look on, and lets thee alone, That whereas thou counts thy self an Angel of Light, thou shalt appear in the light of the Sun, to be a Devil, *A-dam*, and the Curse that the Creation groans under; and the time is now come for thy downfal, and *Jacob* must rise, who is the universal Spirit of love and righteousness, that fils, and will fill all the Earth.

Thou teaching and ruling power of flesh, thou hast had three periods of time, to vaunt thy self over thy Brother; the first was from the time of thy coming in, called *A-dam*, or a stoppage, till *Moses* came; and there thou that wast a self-lover in *Cain*, killed thy brother *Abel*, a plain-hearted man that loved righteousness: And thou by thy wisdom and beastly government, made the whole Earth to stinck, till *Noah* came, which was a time of the world, like the coming in of the watery Seed into the womb, towards the bringing forth of the man child.

And from *Noah* till *Moses* came, thou still hast ruled in vaunting, pride, and cruel oppression; *Ishmael* against *Isaac*, *Esau* against *Jacob*; for thou hast still been the man of flesh that hath ever persecuted the man of righteousness, the Spirit Reason.

And Secondly, from *Moses* till the *Son of Man* came, which was time of the world, that the man child could not speak like a man, but lisping, making signs to shew his meaning; as we see many Creatures that cannot speak do. For *Moses* Law was a Language lapped up in Types, Sacrifices, Forms, and Customs, which was weak time. And in this time likewise, O thou teaching and ruling power, thou wast an oppressor; for look into Scriptures and see if *Aaron* and the Priests were not the first that deceived the people; and the Rulers, as Kings and Governors, were continually the Ocean-head, out of whose power, Burdens, Oppressions, and Poverty did flow out upon the Earth: and these two Powers still hath been the Curse, that hath led the Earth, mankind, into

"England is not a free people, till the poor that have no land,
have a free allowance to dig and labour the commons..."

Gerrard Winstanley, 1649



confusion and death by their imaginary and selvish teaching and ruling, and it could be no otherwise; for while man looks upon himself, as an imperfect Creation, and seeks and runs abroad for a teacher and a rule, he is all this time a stranger to the Spirit that is within himself. But though the Earth hath been generally thus in darkness, since the *A-dam* rise up, and hath owned a Light, and a Law without them to walk by, yet some have been found as watchmen, in this night time of the world, that have been taught by the Spirit within them, and not by any flesh

without them, as *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob*, and the Prophets: And these, and such as these, have still been the Butt, at whom, the powers of the Earth in all ages of the world, by their selvish Laws, have shot their fury.

And then Thirdly, from the time of the *Son of man*, which was time that the man-child began to speak like a child growing upward to manhood, till now, that the Spirit is rising up in strength. O thou teaching and ruling power of the earthly man, thou has been an oppressor, by imprisonment, impoverishing, and martyrdom; and all thy power and wit, hath been to make Laws, and execute thm against such as stand for universal Liberty, which is the rising up of *Jacob*: as by those ancient enslaving Laws not yet blotted out, but held up as weapons against the man-child.

O thou Powers of *England*, though thou hast promised to make this People a Free People, yet thou hast so handled the matter, through thy self-seeking humour, That thou has wrapped us up more in bondage, and oppression lies heavier upon us; not only bringing thy fellow Creatures, the Commoners, to a morsel of Bread, but by confounding all sorts of people by thy Government, of doing and undoing.

First, Thou hast made the people to take a Covenant and Oaths to endeavour a Reformation, and to bring in Liberty every man in his place; and yet while a man is in pursuing of that Covenant, he is imprisoned and oppressed by thy Officers, Courts, and Justices, so called.

Thou hast made Ordinances to cast down Oppressing, Popish, Episcopal, Self-willed and Prerogative Laws; yet we see, That Self-wil and Prerogative power, is the great standing Law, that rules all in action, and others in words.

Thou hast made many promises and protestations to make the Land a Free Nation: And yet at this very day, the same people, to whom thou hast made such Protestatins of Liberty, are oppressed by thy Courts, Sizes, Sessions, by thy Justices and Clarks of the Peace, so called, Bayliffs, Committees, are imprisoned, and forced to spend that bread, that should save their lives from Famine.

And all this, Because they stand to maintain an universal Liberty and Freedom, which not only is our Birthright, which our Maker gave us, but which thou hast promised to restore unto us, from under the former oppressing Powers that are gone before, and which likewise we have bought with our Money, in Taxes, Free-quarter, and Bloud-shed; all which Sums thou hast received at our hands, and yet thou hast not given us our bargain.

O thou *A-dam*, thou *Esau*, thou *Cain*, thou Hypocritical man of flesh, when wilt thou cease to kill thy younger Brother? Surely thou must not do this great work of advancing the Creation out of Bondage; for thou art lost extremely, and drowned in the Sea of Covetousnesse, Pride, and hardness of heart. *The blessing shall rise out of the dust which thou treadest under foot, Even the poor despised People, and they shall hold up Salvation to this Land, and to all Lands, and thou shalt be ashamed.*

Our bodies as yet are in thy hand, our Spirit waits in quiet and peace, upon our Father for Deliverance; and if he give our Bloud into thy hand, for thee to spill, know this, That he is our Almighty Captain: And if some of you will not dare to shed your bloud, to maintain Tyranny and Oppression upon the Creation, know this, That our Bloud and Life shall not be unwilling to be delivered up in meekness to maintain universal Liberty, that so the Curse on our part may be taken off the Creation.

And we shall not do this by force of Arms, we abhorre it, For that is the work of the *Midianites*, to kill one another; But by obeying the Lord of Hosts, who hath Revealed himself in us, and to us, by labouring the Earth in righteousness together, to eate our bread with the sweat of our brows, neither giving hire, nor taking hire, but working together, and eating together, as one man, or as one house of Israel restored from Bondage; and so by the power of Reason, the Law of righteousness in us, we endeavour to lift up the Creation from that bondage of Civil Propriety, which it groans under.

We are made to hold forth this Declaration to you that are the Great Council, and to you the Great Army of the Land of *England*, that you may know what we would have, and what you are bound to give us by your Covenants and Promises; and that you may joyn with us in this Work, and so find Peace. Or else, if you do oppose us, we have peace in our Work, and in declaring this Report: And you shall be left without excuse.

The Work we are going about is this, To dig up *Georges-Hill* and the waste Ground thereabouts, and to Sow Corn, and to eat our bread together by the sweat of our brows.

And the First Reason is this, That we may work in righteousness, and lay the Foundation of making the Earth a Common Treasury for All, both Rich and Poor, That every one that is born in the land, may be fed by the Earth his Mother that brought him forth, according to the Reason that rules in the Creation. Not Inclosing any part into any particular hand, but all as one man, working together, and feeding together as Sons of one Father, members of one Family; not one Lording over another, but all looking upon each other, as equals in the Creation; so that our Maker may be glorified in the work of his own hands, and that every one may see, he is no respecter of Persons, but equally loves his whole Creation, and hates nothing but the Serpent, which is Covetousness, branching forth into selvish Imagination, Pride, Envie, Hypocrisie, Uncleanness; all seeking the ease and honor of flesh, and fighting

against the Spirit Reason that made the Creation; for that is the Corruption, the Curse, the Devil, the Father of Lies; Death and Bondage that Serpent and Dragon that the Creation is to be delivered from.

And we have moved hereunto for that Reason, and other which hath been shewed us, both by Vision, Voyce, and Revelation.

For it is shewed us, That so long as we, That so long as we, or any other, doth own the Earth to be the peculier Interest of Lords and Landlords, and not common to others as well as them, we own the Curse, and holds the Creation under bondage; and so long as we or any other doth own Landlords and Tennants, for one to call the Land his, or another to hire it of him, or for one to give hire, and for another to work for hire; this is to dishonour the work of Creation; as if the righteous Creator should have respect to persons, and therefore made the Earth for some, and not for all: And so long as we, or any other maintain this Civil Propriety, we consent still to hold the Creation down under that bondage it groans under, and so we should hinder the work of Restoration, and sin against Light that is given into us, and so through fear of the flesh man, lose our peace.

And that this Civil Propriety is the Curse, is manifest thus, Those that Buy and Sell Land, and are landlords, have got it either by Oppression, or Murther, or Theft; and all landlords lives in the breach of the Seventh and Eighth Commandements, *Thou shalt not steal, nor kill.*

First by their Oppression. They have by their subtle imaginary and covetous wit, got the plain-hearted poor, or yonger Brethren to work for them, for small wages, and by their work have got a great increase; for the poor by their labour lifts up Tyrants to rule over them; or else by their covetous wit, they have out-reached the plain-hearted in Buying and Selling, and thereby enriched themselves, but impoverished others: or else by their subtile wit, having been a lifter up into places of Trust, have inforced people to pay Money for a Publick use, but have divided much of it into their private purses; and so have got it by Oppression.

Then Secondly for Murther; They have by subtile wit and power, pretended to preserve a people in safety by the power of the Sword; and what by large Pay, much Free-quarter, and other Booties, which they call their own, they get much Monies, and with this they buy Land, and become landlords; and if once Landlords, then they rise to be Justices, Rulers, and State Governours, as experience shewes: But all this is but a bloody and subtile Theeevery, countenanced by a Law that Covetousness made; and is a breach of the Seventh Commandement, *Thou shalt not kill.*

And likewise Thirdly a breach of the Eighth Commandement, *Thou shalt not steal;* but these landlords have thus stoln the Earth from their fellow Creatures, that have an equal share with them, by the Law of Reason and Creation, as well as they.

And such as these rise up to be rich in the objects of the Earth; then by their plausible words of flattery to the plain-hearted people, whom they deceive, and that lies under confusion and blindness: They are lifted up to be Teachers, Rulers, and Law makers over them that lifted them up; as if the Earth were made peculiarly for them, and not for other weal: If you cast your eye a little backward, you shall see, That this outward Teaching and Ruling power, is the Babylonish yoke laid upon Israel of old, under *Nebuchadnezzar*; and so



Successively from that time, the Conquering Enemy, have still laid these yokes upon Israel to keep *Jacob* down: And the last enslaving Conquest which the Enemy got over Israel, was the *Norman* over *England*; and from that time, Kings, Lords, Judges, Justices, Bayliffs, and the violent bitter people that are Free-holders, are and have been Successively. The *Norman* Bastard *William* himself, his Colonels, Captains, inferiour Officers, and Common souldiers, who still are from that time to this day in pursuite of that victory, Imprisoning, Robbing, and killing the poor enslaved *English* Israelites.

And this appears clear, For when any Trustee or State Officer is to be Chosen, The Free-holders or Landlords must be the Chusers, who are the *Norman* Common Souldiers, spread abroad in the Land; And who must be Chosen: but some very

rich man, who is the Successor of the *Norman* Colonels or high Officers. And to what end have they been thus Chosen? but to Establish that *Norman* power the more forcibly over the enslaved *English*, and to beat them down again, when as they gather heart to seek for Liberty.

For what are all those Binding and Restraining Laws that have been made from one Age to another since that Conquest, and are still upheld by Furie over the People? I say, What are they? but the Cords, Bands, Manacles, and Yokes that the enslaved *English*, like *Newgate* Prisoners, wears upn their hands and legs as they walk the streets; by which those *Norman* Oppressors, and these their Successors from Age to Age have enslaved the poor People by, killed their younger Brother, and would not suffer *Jacob* to arise.

O what mighty Delusion, do you, who are the powers of *England* live in! That while you pretend to throw down that *Norman* yoke, and *Babylonish* power, and have promised to make the groaning people of *England* a Free People; yet you still lift up that *Norman* yoke, and slavish Tyranny, and holds the People as much in bondage, as the Bastard Conquerour himself, and his Council of War.

Take notice, That *England* is not a Free People, till the Poor that have no Land, have a free allowance to dig and labour the Commons, and so live as Comfortably as the Landlords that live in their Inclosures. For the People have not laid out their Monies, and shed their Bloud, that their Landlords, the *Norman* power, should still have its liberty and freedom to rule in Tyranny in his Lords, landlords, Judges, Justices, Bayliffs, and State Servants; but that the Oppressed might be set Free, Prison doors opened, and the Poor peoples hearts comforted by an universal Consent of making the Earth a Common Treasury, that they may live together as one House of Israel, united in brotherly love into one Spirit; and having a comfortable livelihood in the Community of one Earth their Mother.

If you look through the Earth, you shall see, That the landlords, Teachers and Rulers, are Oppressors, Murtherers, and Theeves in this manner; But it was not thus from the Beginning. And this is one Reason of our digging and labouring the Earth one with another; That we might work in righteousness, and lift up the Creation from bondage: For so long as we own Landlords in this Corrupt Settlement, we cannot work in righteousness; for we should still lift up the Curse, and tread down the Creation, dishonour the Spirit of universal Liberty, and hinder the work of Restauration.

Secondly, In that we begin to Digge upon *George-Hill*, to eate our Bread together by righteous labour, and sweat of our browes, It was shewed us by Vision in Dreams, and out of Dreams, That that should be the Place we should begin upon; And though that Earth in view of Flesh, be very barren, yet we should trust the Spirit for a blessing. And that not only this Common, or Heath should be taken in and Manured by the People, but all the Commons and waste Ground in *England*, and in the whole World, shall be taken in by the People in righteousness, not owning any Propriety; but taking the Earth to be a Common Treasury, as it was first made for all.

Thirdly, It is shewed us, That all the Prophecies, Visions, and Revelations of Scriptures, of Prophets, and Apostles, concerning the calling of the Jews, the Restauration of Israel; and making of that People, the Inheritors of the whole Earth; doth all seat themselves in this Work of making the Earth a Common Treasury; as you may read, *Ezek. 24.26, 27, &c. Jer. 33.7 to 12. Esay. 49.17, 18, &c. Zach. 8. from 4, to 12, Dan. 2.44, 45, Dan. 7.27. Hos. 14.5, 6,7. Joel 2.26, 27. Amos 9. from 8 to the end, Obad. 17.18.21. Mic. 5. from 7 to the end, Hab. 2.6, 7, 8, 13, 14. Gen. 18.18. Rom. 11.15. Zeph. 3. &c. Zech. 14.9.*

And when the Son of man , was gone from the Apostles, his Spirit descended upon the Apostles and Brethren, as they were waiting at *Jerusalem*; and Rich men sold their Possessions, and gave part to the Poor; and no man said, That ought that he possessed was his own, for they had all things Common, *Act. 4.32.*

Now this Community was supprest by covetous proud flesh, which was the powers that ruled the world; and the righteous Father suffered himself thus to be suppressed for a time, times and dividing of time, or for 42 months, or for three days and half, which are all but one and the same term of time: And the world is now come to the half day; and the Spirit of Christ, which is the Spirit of universal Community and Freedom is risen, and is rising, and will rise higher and higher, till those pure waters of *Shiloe*, the Well Springs of Life and Liberty to the whole Creation, do over-run *A-dam*, and drown those banks of Bondage, Curse and Slavery.

Fourthly, This work to make the Earth a Common Treasury, was shewed us by Voice in Trance, and out of Trance, which which words were these,

Work together, Eat Bread together, Declare this all abroad.

Which Voice was heard Three times: And in Obedience to the Spirit, We have Declared this by Word of mouth, as occasion was offered. Secondly, We have declared it by writing, which others may reade. Thirdly, We have now begun to declare it by Action, in Dicing up the Common Land, and casting in Seed that we may eat our Bread together in righteousness. And every one that comes to work, shall eate the Fruit of their own labours, one having as much Freedom in the Fruit of the Earth as another. Another Voice that was heard was this,

Israel shall neither take Hire, nor give Hire.

And if so, then certainly none shall say, This is my Land, work for me, and I'le give you Wages. For, The Earth is the Lords, that is, Mans, who is Lord of the Creation, in every branch of mankind; perfect; so every particular man is but a member or branch of mankind; and mankind living in the light and obedience to Reason, the King of righteousness, is thereby made a fit and compleat Lord of the Creation. And the whole Earth is this Lords Man, subject to the Spirit.

And not the Inheritance of covetous proud Flesh, that is selvish, and enmity to the Spirit.

And if the Earth be not peculiar to any one branch, or branches of manking, but the Inheritance of all; Then is it Free and Common for all, to work together, and eate together.

And truly, you Counsellors and Powers of the Earth, know this, That wheresoever there is a People, thus united by Common Community of livelihood into Oneness, it will become the strongest Land in the World, for then they will be as one man to defend their Inheritance; and Salvation (which is Liberty and Peace) is the Walls and Bulwarks of that Land or City.

Whereas on the otherside, pleading for Propriety and single Interst, divides the People of a land, and the whole world into Parties, and is the cause of all Wars and Bloud-shed, and Contention every where.

Another Voice that was heard in a Trance, was this,

Whosoever labours the Earth for any Person or Persons, that are lifted up to rule over others, and doth not look upon themselves, as Equal to others in the Creation: The hand of the Lord shall be upon that Laborer: I the Lord have spoke it, and I will do it.

This Declares likewise to all Laborers, or such as are called Poor people, that they shall not dare to work for Hire, for any Landlord, or for any that is lifted up above others; for by their labours, they have lifted up Tyrants and Tyranny; and by denying to labor for Hire, they shall pull them down again. He that works for another, either for Wages, or to pay him Rent, works unrighteously, and still lifts up the Curse; but they that are resolved to work and eat together, making the Earth a Common Treasury, doth joyn hands with Christ, to lift up the Creation from Bondage, and restores all things from the Curse.

Fiftly, That which does encourage us to go on in this work, is this; we find the streaming out of Love in our hearts towards all; to enemies as well as friends; we would have none live in Beggery, Poverty, or Sorrow, but that everyone might enjoy the benefit of his creation: we have peace in our hearts, and quiet rejoicing in our work, and filled with sweet content, though we have but a dish of roots and bread for our food.

And we are assured, that in the strength of this Spirit that hath manifested himself to us, we shall not be startled, neither at Prison nor Death, while we are about his work; and we have bin made to sit down and count what it may cost us in undertaking such a work, and we know the full sum, and are resolved to give all that we have to buy this Pearl which we see in the Field.

For by this work we are assured, and Reason makes it appear to others, that Bondage shall be removed, Tears wiped away, and all poor People by their righteous Labours shall be relieved, and freed from Poverty and Straits; For is this work of Restoration there will be no begger in Israel: For surely, if there was no Begger in literal Israel, there shall be no Begger in Spiritual Israel the Anti-type, much more.

Sixtly, We have another encouragement that this work shall prosper, Because we see it to be the fulness of Time: For whereas The Son of Man, the *Lamb*, came in the Fulness of Time, that is, when the Powers of the World made the Earth stink every where, by oppressing others, under pretense of worshipping the Spirit rightly, by the Types and Sacrifices of *Moses* law; the Priests were

grown so abominably Covetous and Proud, that they made the People to loathe the Sacrifices and to groan under the Burden of their Oppressing Pride. Even so now in this Age of the World, that the Spirit is upon his Resurrection, it is likewise the Fulness of Time in a higher measure. For whereas the People generally in former times did rest upon the very observation of the Sacrifices and Types, but persecuted the very name of the Spirit; Even so now, Professors do rest upn the bare observatin of Forms and Customs, and pretend to the Spirit, and yet persecutes, grudges, and hates the power of the Spirit; and as it

was then, so it is now: All places stink with the abomination of Self-seeking Teachers and Rulers. For do not I see that everyone Preacheth for money, Counsels for money, and fights for money to maintain particular Interests? And none of these three, that pretend to give liberty to the Creation, do give liberty to the Creation; neither can they, for they are enemies to universal liberty; So that the earth stinks with their Hypocrisie, Covetousness, Envie, sottish Ignorance, and Pride.

The common People are filled with good words from Pulpits and Councel Tables, but no good Deeds; For they wait and wait for good, and for deliverances, but none comes; While they wait for liberty, behold greater bondage comes instead of it, and burdens, oppressions, taskmasters, from Sessions, Lawyers, Bayliffs of Hundreds, Committees, Impropiators, Clerks of Peace, and Courts of Justice, so called, does whip the People



by old Popish weather-beaten Laws, that were excommunicate long age by Covenants, Oaths, and Ordinances; but as yet are not cast out, but rather taken in again, to be standing pricks in our eys, and thorns in our side; Beside Free-quartering, Plundering by some rude Souldiers, and the abounding of Taxes; which if they were equally divided among the Souldiery, and not too much bagd up in the hands of particulars Officers and Trustees, there would be less complaining: Besides the horrible cheating that is in Buying and Selling, and the cruel Oppression of Landlords, and Lords of Mannours, and quarter Sessions; Many that have bin good Souldiers, and so to fight to uphold the Curse, or else live in great straits and beggery: O you *A-dams* of the Earth, you have right Clothing, full Bellies, have your Honors and Ease, and you puffe at this; But know thou stout-hearted *Pharoah*, that the day of Judgement is begun, and it will reach to thee ere long; *Jacob* hath bin very low, but he is rising, and will rise, do the worst thou canst; and the poor people whom thou oppresses, shall be the Saviours of the land; For the blessing is rising up in them, and thou shalt be ashamed.

And thus, you Powers of England, and of the whole World, we have declared our Reasons, why we have begun to dug upon *George* hill in Surrey. One thing I must tell you more, in the close, which I received *in voce* likewise at another time; and when I received it, my ey was set towards you. The words were these:

Let Israel go free.

Surely, as Israel lay 430. years under *Pharoahs* bondage, before *Moses* was sent to fetch them out: even so Israel (the Elect Spirit spread in Sons and Daughters) hath lain three times so long already, which is the Anti-type, under your Bondage, and cruel Taskmasters: But now the time of Deliverance is come, and thou proud Esau, and stout-hearted Covetousness, thou must come down, and be lord of the Creation no longer. For *now the King of Righteousness is rising to Rule In, and Over the Earth.*

Therefore, if thou wilt find Mercy, *Let Israel go Free*; break in pieces quickly the Band of particular Propriety, dis-own this oppressing Murder, Oppression and Thievery of Buying and Selling of Land, owning of landlords, and paying of Rents, and give thy Free Consent to make the Earth a Common Treasury, without grumbling; That the younger Brethren may live comfortably upon Earth, as well as the Elder: That all may enjoy the benefit of their Creation.

And hereby thou wilt *Honour thy Father, and thy Mother*: Thy Father, which is the Spirit of Community, that made all, and that dwells in all. Thy Mother, which is the Earth, that brought us all forth: That as a true Mother, loves all her Children. Therefore do not thou hinder the Mother Earth, from giving all her Children such, by thy Inclosing it into particular hands, and holding up that cursed Bondage of Inclosure by thy Power.

And then thou wilt repent of thy *Theft*, in maintaining the breach of the eight Commandment, by *Stealing* the Land as I say from thy fellow-creatures, or younger Brothers: which thou and all thy landlords have, and do live in the breach of that Commandment.

Then thou wilt *Own no other God*, or Ruling Power, *but One*, which is the King of Righteousness, ruling and dwelling in every one, and in the whole; whereas now thou hast many gods: For Covetousness is thy God, Pride, and an Envious murdering Humor (to kill one by Prison or Gallows, that crosses thee, though their cause be pure, sound, and good reason) is thy God, Self-love, and slavish Fear (lest others serve thee as thou hast served them) is thy god, Hypocrisie, Fleshly Imagination, that keeps no Promise, Covenant, nor Protestation, is thy God: love of Money, Honor, and Ease, is thy God: And all these, and the like Ruling Powers, makes thee Blind, and hard-hearted, that thou does not, nor cannot lay to heart the affliction of others, though they dy for want of bread, in that rich City, undone under your eys.

Therefore once more, *Let Israel go Free*, that the poor may labour the Waste land, and such the Breasts of their mother *Earth*, that they starve not: And in so doing, thou wilt keep the *Sabbath day*, which is a day of *Rest*; sweetly enjoying the Peace of the Spirit of Righteousness; and find Peace, by living among a people that live in peace; this will be a day of *Rest* which thou never knew yet. But I do not entreat thee, for thou art not to be intreated, but in the *Name of the Lord*, that hath drawn me forth to speak to thee; I, yea I say, I Command thee, to *let Israel go Free*, and quietly *to gather together into the place where I shall appoint; and hold them no longer in bondage.*

And thou *A-dam* that holds the Earth in slavery under the Curse: If thou wilt not *let Israel go Free*; for thou being the Antitype, will be more stout and lusty than the *Egyptian Paroah* of old, who was thy Type; Then know, That whereas I brought *Ten Plagues* upon him, I will *Multiply* may Plagues upon thee, till I

make thee weary, and miserably ashamed: And I will bring out my People with a strong hand, and stretched out arme.

Thus we have discharged our Souls in declaring the Cause of our Digging upon *George-Hill* in *Surrey*, that the Great Council and Army of the Land may take notice of it, That there is no intent of Tumult or Fighting, but only to get Bread to eat, with the sweat of our brows; working together in righteousness, and eating the blessings of the Earth in peace.

And if any of you that are the great Ones of the Earth, that have been bred tenderly, and cannot word, do bring in your Stock into this Command Treasury as an Offering to the work of Righteousness; we will work for you, and you shall receive as we receive. But if you will not, but *Paroah* like cry, *Who is the Lord that we should obey him?* and endeavour to Oppose, then know, That he that delivered Israel from *Pharoah* of old, is the same Power still, in whom we trust, and whom we serve; for this Conquest over thee shall be got, *not by Sword or Weapon, but by my Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts.*

Jerrard Winstanley, William Everard, Richard Goodgroom, John Palmer, Thomas Starre, John South, William Hoggrill, John Courton, Robert Sawyer, William Taylor, Thomas Eder, Christopher Clifford, Henry Bickerstaffe, John Barker, John Taylor, &c.

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Why celebrate The Diggers?

Aug98 - by Tony Gosling and Jim Paton

The English Civil War was a pivotal point in world history. Political power was seized by the burgeoning English merchant class, which went on to create the Industrial Revolution and build one of the biggest exploitative empires the world has ever seen. In the late 1640s, Cromwell was constructing the police state on which his middle class revolution would be based.

The British education system leaves us with an image of Roundheads and Cavaliers, Parliament fighting the King. Parliament, teachers explain, was more representative than the King and so Cromwell's victory was a victory for the people. But history is not always as it seems, particularly when 'written by the winners'.

The parliament of the day was anything but representative. Elections had been suspended and soldiers, on several occasions, were in the Houses of Parliament, arresting MP's who would not toe the line. It was a schizophrenic war, with roundhead soldiers frequently having more to fear from their own commanders than the so called enemy. This gives ironic credence to the view that the most distinguishing difference between the warring parties was in the style of their officers' hats.

Research since the 1940s by historians Christopher Hill, H.N. Brailsford, Brian Manning and others has begun to bring recognition to long-neglected popular civil war movements and events. The Levellers were a vast popular movement which took its name from the anti-enclosure activists earlier in the century. The Levellers are only now being acknowledged as the first political faction on

either side of the Atlantic to organise itself on a pattern of democratic self-government.

When Leveller pamphleteer John Lilburne was arrested and tried for treason events in the courtroom were relayed out to thousands jamming the streets around Guildhall. When he died, tens of thousands of ordinary Londoners turned out to pay their respects at what is now thought to have been the largest funeral of the century.

Most textbooks still skim over the people's war. One present-day history teacher even testifies to having been reprimanded by her headmistress for giving a lesson on the Levellers. In some schools they are still considered 'too political'.

The Leveller women, Elizabeth Lilburne and Katherine Chidley amongst others, were centuries ahead of their time. Tens of thousands of women signed their equal rights petitions but when thousands of women delivered one of them to parliament they received short shrift. They were told by Cromwell's Parliamentarians to 'go home and wash the dishes'.

The war was a time of great popular ferment. It was by no means clear what form of government would replace the monarchy and the Leveller party pulled together many visions of a better country and a better world. There was a great deal of discussion, especially within the parliamentary army, about what had been wrong with the old system and how best to replace it.

Printing had been strictly controlled by the Stationers Guild before the war. But sympathetic Leveller soldiers liberated presses and publisher Giles Calvert (the name resurrected by Calverts Press in Shoreditch today) helped ensure that Leveller ideas were available to counter Royalist and Parliamentarian propaganda. Lilburne's 'Agreement of the People' captured ordinary people's vision of a fairer more representative government of which England could be proud. A definite improvement on the monarchy. Many of the liberties enshrined in the 'Agreement' was an inspiration subsequently acknowledged by radical reformers right across the world.

So worried were the Parliamentarians by Leveller literature that they had the pamphleteers imprisoned and lying propaganda was issued to discredit them. As a final body-blow Cromwell's 'mercenary damne crew' treacherously decimated the final regiments of faithful Leveller soldiers.

The Diggers appeared in a nation wracked by the fallout of war just as this end-game was being played out. On 1st April 1649 calling themselves the 'True Levellers' they occupied a small area of common land at St. George's Hill near Weybridge in Surrey. Winstanley believed in a radical form of Christianity spelt out in confessional pamphlets like 'The Saint's paradise':

"To my beloved friends, whose souls hunger after sincere milk.

Dear friends, It hath been the universall condition of the earth (mankind) to be over-spread with a black cloud of darkness ; and the knowledge of the King of righteousness hath been manifested but in some few scattered ones... ...I spoke the name of God, and Lord, and Christ, but I knew not this Lord, God and Christ; I prayed to a God but I knew not where he was, nor what he was, and so walking by imagination, I worshipped that devill, and called him God; by reason wherof my comforts were often shaken to pieces, and at last it was shewed to me, That while I builded upon any words or writings of other men,

or while I looked after a God without me, I did but build upon the sand, and as yet I knew not the rock."

To Winstanley mankind is the Lord of the Creation, but he was always careful to explain that using the term "mankind" included women as fully as men. Sovereignty is given to each soul to use for good or ill as they choose. The thought of some sovereign force outside the sphere of the individual he saw as an insult to "the great creator, Reason".

Declaring the earth a 'common treasury for all' Gerrard Winstanley went further than the Levellers had dared. With his 40 or so supporters he issued a peaceful challenge to all the nation to come and join him, to help cast off the 'Norman yoke' and liberate the land of England forever. To set an example the world could follow.

Winstanley called this practical manifesto 'The True Levellers' Standard Advanced'. He was expanding on Leveller ideas to tackle issues even more fundamental to the plight of common people.

For all their popular support most Levellers believed it would only be necessary to revise the parliament. The Diggers went further, tackling social questions that Levellers had only touched on. Questions like whether the state has any jurisdiction over those not willingly consenting to it. In Winstanley's vision there was no place for the familiar institutions the Levellers wanted to reform.

Central in his analysis was addressing the hard fact of land poverty and dispossession, leaving those who had been masters of their own destiny in the clutches of 'Lords of Manors and Lords of the Land.' When Winstanley addressed England's landowners in 'a declaration of the poor oppressed people of England' he struck at the very root of class divisions:

"...the earth was not made purposely for you, to be Lords of it, and we to be your Slaves, Servants, and Beggars; but it was made to be a common Livelihood to all, without respect of persons: And that your buying and selling of Land, and the Fruits of it, one to another, is The Cursed thing, and was brought in by War; which hath, and still does establish murder, and theft, in the branches of some parts of Mankinde over others..."

Winstanley straightforwardly exposed what he saw as the fraud of the civil war as Lilburne had done before him. It was a popular point of view in 1649 which is only recently being acknowledged:

"O thou powers of England, though thou hast promised to make this People a Free People, yet thou hast so handled the matter, through thy self-seeking humour, That thou hast wrapped us up more in bondage, and oppression lies heavier upon us; not only bringing thy fellow creatures, the Commoners, to a morsel of Bread, but by confounding all sorts of people by thy Government..."

He was determined to strike at the root causes of social conflict. In spirited prose, he explained why the Diggers had chosen to act and spelt out his vision for an equitable future.

And the First Reason is this, That we may work in righteousness, and lay the Foundation of making the Earth a Common Treasury for All, both Rich and Poor, That every one that is born in the Land, may be fed by the Earth his Mother that brought him forth, according to the Reason that rules in the Creation. Not Inclosing any part into any particular hand, but all as one man, working together and feeding together as Sons of one Father, members of one

Family; not one Lording over another, but all looking upon each other as equals in the Creation;

As the Diggers built their makeshift settlement their pamphlets and their ideas were spreading. The common at St. George's Hill was planted with parsnips, carrots and beans. Several more Digger colonies sprang up around the country, especially in Buckinghamshire and Kent, with a major settlement at Wllingborough in Northamptonshire.

The local clergyman-landowner, Parson Platt, dismissed Winstanley's Christian creed and that of his squatters. Means legal and illegal were used to confiscate livestock and destroy the encampment and crops, leaving the Digger community without food. But the Diggers didn't give up. The colony at St.George's Hill lasted only a few months, but they moved to another site near Cobham, where they were able to stay longer and raise crops. As the year wore on and winter came, however, conditions were increasingly cold and grim. Eventually they were defeated by constant attacks and oppression after a year, as malnutrition and general ill-health took their toll. Other Digger settlements lasted longer and the colony at Wellingborough gave money to support the Surrey Diggers as their venture came to an end.

Though the experiment had ended the vision refused to go away.

In the same way that Leveller ideas were taken up by.... Thomas Paine and others so the Digger philosophy has stuck. It can be traced in the Monmouth Rebellion, in the French Revolution and amongst its supporters in other countries, in the Paris Commune and in British land struggles throughout the last two centuries. In the tradition of social equity there are few that have stripped social assumptions back so far as Winstanley. His critiques transcend concepts of left or right. Winstanley's demanded no less than direct personal access to natural resources.

His convictions on common ownership reflected those of the Christian apostles: "*Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common.*" Acts 4.32

Winstanley equated the extension of private property rights with evil and the concept of participative common rights with good. He particularly highlighted land as the key resource being privatised or inclosed in his day, directly against the interests and wishes of dispossessed commoners.

By the early 1900's almost all land in Britain had been inclosed. Leaving the vast majority of the population landless, taking their livelihood through others. The capitalist champions of private ownership have had to make new inroads, both deregulating and defiling remaining commons such as the seas and the air and bringing even the natural monopolies such as public utilities into private ownership.

Rights once thought inalienable have been recently stripped away in legislation such as the Criminal Justice Act 1995 and Police Act 1997. Meanwhile private property rights are being extended even into the building blocks of life itself. The Landlords are being surpassed. Indian writer Vandana Shiva recently coined the expression 'Lifelords' for companies such as Monsanto new owners of copyrighted strains of living material. The extension of private property rights is now reaching unheard of proportions

What unnerving foresight Winstanley showed in his warnings and how can we not take up his challenge to those who followed him to continue his work.

"And here I end, having put my Arm as far as my strength will go to advance Righteousness: I have Writ, I have Acted, I have Peace: and now I must wait to see the Spirit do his own work in the hearts of others, and whether England shall be the first Land, or some others, wherin Truth shall sit down in triumph."

A Bill of Account of the most Remarkable Sufferings that the Diggers have met with... Gerrard Winstanley 1649/50

Tony Gosling is a researcher with The Land Is Ours www.oneworld.org/tlio/

Jim Paton works at the Advisory Service for Squatters, 2 St Paul's Road, LONDON N1

The Diggers' Song

The World Turned Upside Down

In 1649, to Saint George's Hill

A ragged band they called The Diggers came to show the people's will

They defied the landlords, they defied the law

They were the dispossessed reclaiming what was theirs

'We come in peace' they said, 'to dig and sow

We come to work the land in common and to make the waste-land grow

This earth divided, we will make whole

So it can be a common treasury for all'

'The sin of property, we do disdain

No man has any right to buy and sell the earth for private gain

By theft and murder, they took the land

Now everywhere the walls spring up at their command'

'They make the laws, to chain us well

The clergy dazzle us with heaven or they damn us into hell

We will not worship the god they serve

The god of greed who feeds the rich while poor men starve

We work, we eat together, we need no swords

We will not bow to the masters nor pay rent to the lords

We are free men, though we are poor

You diggers all stand up for glory, stand up now

From the men of property

The orders came

They sent the hired men and troopers

To wipe out the Diggers claim

Tear down their cottages

Destroy their corn

They were dispersed -

But still the vision lingers on



'You poor take courage
You rich take care
The earth was made a common treasury
For everyone to share
All things in common
All people one
We come in peace' -
The order came to cut them down

'We come in peace' -
The order came to cut them down

The Diggers Song copyright Leon Rosselson

A Declaration by the Diggers of Wellingborough - 1650

A Declaration of the Grounds and Reasons why
we the

Poor Inhabitants of the Town of *Wellingborrow*, in the County
of *Northampton*, have begun and give consent to dig up,
manure and sow Corn upon the Common, and waste
ground, called *Bareshanke* belonging to the Inhabitants of
Wellinborrow, by those that have Subscribed and hundreds
more that give Consent.

EE find in the Word of God, that God made the Earth for the use and comfort of all Mankind, and set him in to till and dresse it, and said, That in the sweat of his brows he should eat his bread; and also we find, that God never gave it to any sort of people, that they should have it all to themselves, and shut out all the rest. but he saith, The Earth hath he given to the children of men, which is every man.

2. We find, that no creature that ever God made was ever deprived of the benefit of the Earth, but Mankind; and that it is nothing but covetousnesse, pride, and hardnesse of heart, that hath caused man so far to degenerate.

3. We find in the Scriptures, that the Prophets and Apostles have left it upon Record, That in the last days the oppressor and proud man shall cease, and God will restore the waste places of the Earth to the use and comfort of Man, and that none shall hurt nor destroy in all his holy Mountain.

4. We have great Encouragement from these two righteous Acts, which the Parliament of England have set forth, the one against Kingly Power, the other to make England a Free Common-wealth.

5. We are necessitated from our present necessity to do this, and we hope that our Actions will justifie us in the gate when all men shall know the truth of our necessity: we are in Wellinborrow in one Parish 1169 persons that receive Alms, as the Officers have made it appear at the Quarter Sessions last: we have made our Case known to the Justices, the Justices have given Order that the

Town should raise a Stock to set us on work, and that the Hundred should be enjoyned to assist them; but as yet we see nothing is done, nor any man that goeth about it; we have spent all we have, our trading is decayed, our wives and children cry for bread, our lives are a burden to us, divers of us having 5.6.7.8.9. in Family, and we cannot get bread for one of them by our labor, rich mens hearts are hardened, they will not give us if we beg at their doors; if we steal, the Law will end our lives, divers of the poor are starved to death already and it were better for us that are living to dye by the Sword then by Famine. And now we consider that the Earth is our Mother, and that God hath given it to the children of men, and that the common and waste Grounds belong to the poor, and that we have a right to the common ground both from the Law of the Land, Reason and Scriptures; and therefore we have begun to bestow our righteous labor upon it, and we shall trust the Spirit for a blessing upon our labor, resolving not to dig up any mans property, until they freely give us it; and truly we find great comfort already, through the goodnesse of our God, that some of those rich men amongst us, that have had the greatest profit upon the Common, have freely given us their share in it, as one Mr John Freeman, Thomas Nottingham and John Clendon, and divers others; and the Country Farmers have proffered divers of them to give us Seed to sow it, and so we find that God is perswading Japeth to dwell in the tents of Shem: and truly those that we find most against us are such as have been constant enemies to the Parliaments Cause from first to last.

Now at last our desire is, That some that approve of this work of Righteousnesse, would but spread this our Declaration before the great Council of the Land, that so they may be pleased to give us more encouragement to go on, that so they may be found amongst the small number of those that considers the poor and needy, that so the Lord may deliver them in the time of their troubles, and then they will not be found amongst those that Solomon speaks of, which withhold the Corn (or the Land) from the Poor, which the people shall curse, but blessing shall be upon the heads of those Rulers that sell Corn, and that will let the poor labor upon the Earth to get them Corn, and our lines shall blesse them, so shall good men stand by them, and evil men shall be afraid of them, and they shall be counted the Repairers of our Breaches, and the Restorers of our Paths to dwell in. And thus we have declared the truth of our necessity; and whosoever will come in to us to labor with us, shall have part with us, and we with them, and we shall all of us endeavor to walk righteously and peaceably in the Land of our Nativity.

Richard Smith. John Avery. Thomas Fardin. Richard Pendred. James Pitman. Roger Tuis. Joseph Hichcock. John Pye. Edward Turner.

LONDON, Printed for Giles Calvert. 1650.

[An excellent film about the Diggers by Roy Hanney](http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~royhan/film/)

[The Law of Freedom - Gerrard Winstanley's utopian but workable system of common ownership which he devised after the Diggers. Probably what Winstanley would have thought of as his best writings - nice one Tash!](http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/tash_lodge/winst1.htm)

http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/tash_lodge/winst1.htm

[Gerrard Winstanley and the Diggers](http://www.bucknell.edu/~rennhoff/) <http://www.bucknell.edu/~rennhoff/>

[A page on The Diggers](http://www.lglobal.com/TAO/Freedom/winst.html) <http://www.lglobal.com/TAO/Freedom/winst.html>

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